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Chairman: Mr. Kmoníček ..... (Czech Republic)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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03-61535 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Agenda item 138: Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (A/58/381 and A/58/447 and Corr.1)

Agenda item 140: Financing of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (A/58/192 and Add.1 and A/58/409)

Agenda item 143: Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

(a) United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (A/58/386 and A/58/441)

1. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General containing the proposed budget for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/381), said that, owing to the adjustment of the Mission's mandate by the Security Council in resolution 1493 (2003), the current budgetary proposals superseded those contained in the earlier reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of MONUC (A/57/683 and Add.1). The budget provided for the phased deployment of 10,040 troops, 760 military observers, 182 civilian police, 938 international staff, and 1,299 national staff, including 25 National Officers and 419 United Nations Volunteers, as well as for the administrative and logistical support to its military and civilian personnel deployed in Kinshasa and 21 liaison and field offices in the mission area. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of MONUC were the appropriation of an amount of $93,038,300, in addition to the amount of $582 million that had already been appropriated and assessed by the General Assembly, and the assessment of the additional amount.

2. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General containing the revised budget for the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/192 and Add.1), she said that, in resolution 1473 (2003), the Security Council had decided to revise the mandate of UNMISET and its implementation plan. The revised mandate implementation plan specified a slower pace of withdrawal of military contingents and civilian police and the inclusion of an international formed police unit for one year. By resolution 1480 (2003), the Security Council had decided to extend the mandate of UNMISET until 20 May 2004. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly were to approve the donation of assets with an inventory value of $35,262,900 and corresponding residual value of $15,879,900 to the Government of Timor-Leste on a free-of-charge basis; to appropriate the additional amount of $23,827,500 gross for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004; and to assess the additional amount of $23,827,500 gross at a monthly rate of $1,985,625, should the Security Council decide to continue the mandate of the Mission beyond 20 May 2004.

3. Introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/386), she said that, in resolution 57/330 of 18 June 2003, the General Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $12 million for the period from 1 July to 31 October 2003, to be financed from the accumulated fund balance in the Special Account for the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission. In resolution 1490 (2003) of 3 July 2003, the Security Council had decided to continue the mandate of UNIKOM for a final period until 6 October 2003; that would be followed by a one-month liquidation period. In view of the closure of the Mission, no revised budget would be submitted to the General Assembly for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004. On the basis of the current level of expenditures for UNIKOM, the $12 million commitment authority that had been approved by the General Assembly would suffice to cover the remaining activities of the Mission, including its liquidation. Actual expenditures incurred during that period would be reported to the General Assembly in the context of the performance report.

4. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed budget for MONUC for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/447 and Corr.1), said that the general comments of the Advisory Committee on the proposed budget were contained in paragraphs 9 to 13 of the report and its comments on the Mission's resource requirements in paragraphs 14

to 54. The Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $34 million, or approximately 5 per cent, with respect to the proposed requirements. It further recommended that the total amount assessed for the period at the current time should not exceed $582 million gross ($572,289,264 net). The Advisory Committee would review the situation when it examined the estimates for the 2004/05 period, at which time more information would be available on the role of the Mission in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration programme, as well as in the electoral process.

5. In its report on the financing of UNIKOM for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/441), the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the information that no revised budget would be submitted to the Assembly for UNIKOM for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004.

6. In its report on the revised budget of UNMISET (A/58/409), the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate the additional amount of $23,827,500 gross for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 and that the amount should be assessed at a monthly rate of $1,985,625, should the Security Council decide to continue the mandate of the Mission. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the Assembly should approve the donation of assets with an inventory value of $35,262,900 and a corresponding residual value of $15,879,900 to the Government of Timor-Leste on a free-of-charge basis.

7. **Mr. Martini** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, said that peacekeeping remained a core function of the United Nations and one of the Organization's most visible endeavours. It was therefore important to enhance its efficiency by ensuring that the budgeting process was as accurate as possible. The use of results-based budgeting marked an important step forward and the Secretariat should continue to make further improvements in those techniques in order to more accurately forecast the use of resources against priorities. More visible benchmarks should also be introduced to monitor the accomplishments of administrative strategies and related budgetary investments.

8. The European Union endorsed the view expressed by the Advisory Committee that further efficiency gains could be achieved by reducing the number of staff travelling to the same meetings and through greater use of videoconferencing, especially between peacekeeping missions and Headquarters. Standard ratios for items such as information technology and transport were a useful concept that offered firm guidelines within which missions should operate. Greater use could be made, for example, of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi for the coordination of new synergies in the peacekeeping sector.

9. The European Union was particularly concerned about the fact that peacekeeping missions were often short of cash as a result of the non-payment of assessed contributions by Member States. The timely payment of contributions was essential to the proper functioning of missions and would enable the Secretariat to reimburse contributors of troops and contingent-owned equipment.

10. The European Union would welcome assurances that, in preparing its budget proposals for peacekeeping operations, the Secretariat had taken account of the Advisory Committee's comments on such cross-cutting issues as training, information technology, recruitment and travel. It supported the view expressed by the Advisory Committee with respect to UNMISET that the issue of the disposal of assets must be taken forward in the context of a slower than expected drawdown and that there must be some form of legally binding agreement regarding the handover of weaponry.

11. Security Council resolution 1493 (2003), which reinforced the mandate and staffing of MONUC, would make an important contribution to the current difficult transitional phase in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The European Union was nevertheless concerned about the Advisory Committee's comments about persistent overbudgeting and supported its recommendations on the proposed revised budget level for MONUC.

12. A reduction in the time taken for the filling of vacancies was crucial to the operational effectiveness

of peacekeeping operations. The Galaxy system should therefore be rapidly improved so that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would not have to rely on its own monolingual system, since the principle of the equality of working languages was of particular importance in the staffing of MONUC.

13. **Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that MONUC had proven to be a complex but necessary Mission. The African Group welcomed the progress that had been made thus far in the deployment of military, police and civilian staff, but was fully aware that the vastness of the territory and the unpredictable security situation might continue to hamper the expeditious fulfilment of the wide range of critical tasks that were essential to the full implementation of the mandate of MONUC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In order to make further progress and to sustain the progress achieved, however, adequate numbers of troops must be deployed to ensure full compliance with the ceasefire, the implementation of the disengagement plan and progress towards voluntary disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration. In that connection, the African Group welcomed the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1493 (2003), which enhanced the troop strength and extended the mandate of MONUC for an additional period.

14. While the Secretary-General should be commended for significantly reducing the vacancy rate for international staff, further steps should be taken to ensure that the Mission operated at the full approved strength without delay and that the deficiencies of the Galaxy system were rectified to facilitate the timely recruitment and placement of mission personnel. The Secretariat should also explore all avenues for utilizing expertise that could be found within the region where the peacekeeping mission was located.

15. The African Group noted the information that the Secretariat had provided in document A/58/381 on the steps that had been taken in connection with the airfield services contract for MONUC. Many of the shortcomings that had been previously identified by oversight bodies, in particular the unsatisfactory performance of the contractor, could hamper effective and efficient support to the Mission and should serve as a lesson for the future. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Central Support Services should continue to ensure strict respect for the rules and regulations governing procurement, transparency and the accountability of staff involved in the process.

16. The African Group took note of the Advisory Committee's recommendation of an overall amount that was approximately 5 per cent below the estimate proposed by the Secretary-General for the maintenance of MONUC for the 12-month period ending on 30 June 2004. It wished to underscore the importance of allocating adequate resources to peacekeeping missions. Its position on the recommendations of both the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on the overall resource requirements for MONUC would be determined on the basis of the additional information provided during the informal consultations on the item.

17. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa) said that the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had entered into a new phase that would require the comprehensive engagement and assistance of the United Nations and the international community at large. It was therefore encouraging to see that the proposed budget reflected the readjustment of the structure of MONUC towards meeting the needs of the changing political and military situation on the ground. Her delegation commended the Secretariat on its use of results-based budgeting techniques in preparing the estimates and on the improvements in the format and content of its budget proposals.

18. In considering the resource requirements for MONUC, her delegation would remain cognizant of the fact that the proposed staffing establishment reflected the revised mandate of MONUC and the complexities of the operation. It was of the view that the revised vacancy rate was still too high and that steps should therefore be taken to increase recruitment.

19. Her delegation noted the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the proposed requirements of MONUC should be reduced by $34 million; it would pursue that proposal further in the informal consultations with a view to ensuring that the Committee reached a decision which would guarantee that MONUC continued to receive sufficient and predictable financing at the current critical juncture. In that connection, the Secretariat should provide an analysis of the circumstances that might have contributed to the trend described in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the report of the Advisory Committee

(A/58/447). Projections for the procurement, staffing and deployment levels for the remaining seven months of the financial period would also be welcome.

20. South Africa welcomed the formation of the Transitional Government, which it viewed as a critical first step towards the achievement of lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Support should be provided for the security arrangements for the Transitional Government in Kinshasa and for the work of the Ituri Interim Administration. The new political developments afforded all stakeholders the opportunity to revitalize the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. South Africa was committed to staying the course with the Congolese people as they worked to implement all agreements and to achieve peace and security in their country.

21. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that, while his delegation welcomed the use of results-based-budgeting techniques in the preparation of the budget proposals for MONUC, the linkages between expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and outputs still remained abstract and further efforts were needed to enhance efficiency in such areas as the accumulation and distribution of supplies and to prevent overbudgeting. In that connection, the Advisory Committee, which played a key role in the budget process, should be provided with accurate and sufficient information in a timely manner.

22. With regard to UNMISET, his Government was of the view that the Organization should continue to play an important role in Timor-Leste and that the proposed budget would contribute to that objective.

23. Lastly, his delegation endorsed the contents of the note by the Secretary-General on the financing of UNIKOM for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/386).

24. **Mr. Snowdon** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that peacekeeping was one of the most vital functions of the United Nations. The Committee played an important part in the financing and administration of such operations, and must fulfil that role thoughtfully and carefully.

25. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) continued to face many challenges in fulfilling the mandates which the Security Council had given it. Although there had been progress in bringing peace to much of the country, the Ituri district had experienced violence and atrocities. The arrival of a force led by France, followed by an expansion of MONUC, had improved the situation, but MONUC still had a great deal to do. The political elements necessary for a lasting solution to the problems of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours were not yet in place. The proposed international conference on the African Great Lakes region was important in that regard.

26. He had been pleased to see clear guidance for the work of MONUC in the budget for the Mission, which provided a results-based framework for translating Security Council resolutions into action. It was divided into components with clear expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. He welcomed the emphasis on building the structures and capabilities needed for sustainable peace and he hoped for more progress towards the expected accomplishments as the security situation improved. Although good justifications had been given in the budget for MONUC, the Mission should continue to adapt its activities and resources to the situation on the ground, placing more emphasis on the eastern part of the country as the tempo of MONUC operations there increased. He agreed with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in document A/58/447.

27. The work of the United Nations in Timor-Leste served as a benchmark for what could be achieved in conflict and post-conflict situations. The delay in downsizing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) was an appropriate response to the security situation, which remained fragile. The United Nations should continue to contribute towards the building of political and security institutions in Timor-Leste in order to preserve the progress made so far and to lay the foundations for future stability and prosperity. The financial implications of the delayed drawdown of the Mission and the proposed donation of assets to the Government of Timor-Leste were straightforward; he supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in that regard (A/58/409).

28. **Mr. Mumbey-Wafula** (Uganda) said that his delegation continued to regard peacekeeping operations as important to the maintenance of international peace and security. It was therefore particularly interested in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo. He welcomed the progress made in the deployment of the civilian and military components of the Mission.

29. Although MONUC was one of the most complex missions in United Nations peacekeeping history, it was also one of the most promising in terms of results. The additional mandates conferred by the Security Council in resolution 1493 (2003) would help to make the achievements of MONUC on the ground more sustainable. The external variances which had previously stood in the way of lasting peace were being addressed, as internal and external developments had shown.

30. His delegation hoped that the problem of high vacancy rates in peacekeeping missions, which the African Group had highlighted in meetings of the Committee during the second part of the resumed fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, would not recur as MONUC expanded to its full capacity. It also hoped that the shortcomings which the oversight bodies had identified had been addressed.

31. Adequate resources must be allocated to meet peacekeeping mandates. The provision of sufficient resources to MONUC would go a long way towards establishing peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

32. **Mr. Shalita** (Rwanda) said that his delegation believed that MONUC was playing an important role towards the establishment of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region and commended the presentation of the budget for the Mission in a clear, results-based format.

33. Tens of thousands of genocidal, armed foreign militia personnel were in the country, threatening peace, security, reconciliation and development within and beyond its borders. Until the problem of their presence was tackled, the region could not achieve peace or stability. The international community must support MONUC in its key task of dealing with the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of those combatants. His delegation welcomed Security Council resolution 1493 (2003), which had increased the troop strength and capacity of MONUC and had given it a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter. It also welcomed the efforts being made to reduce vacancy rates and to address administrative problems.

34. While the achievements of MONUC were commendable, the slow progress in the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of members of armed foreign militias remained a concern. His delegation hoped that the Mission's more robust mandate and increased resources would improve the situation, and it requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on that matter by June 2004.

35. Although MONUC had been expecting to accomplish the voluntary disarmament of 4,000 armed foreign combatants, Uganda and other countries in the region estimated that the number of combatants was much higher than 4,000. Not all of those combatants were likely to disarm voluntarily. They might continue to pose a security threat to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours and to prevent the Transitional Government from establishing its authority throughout the country. The international community should be prepared to give MONUC additional capacity to deal with such a situation, if necessary.

Agenda item 134: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/58/559)

36. **Ms. McCreery** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management), introducing the note of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/58/559), said that it was submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 57/306 on investigation into sexual exploitation of refugees by aid workers in West Africa. The note summarized the action taken so far, which included the issuance of a bulletin on the subject (ST/SGB/2003/13) on 9 October 2003. The bulletin laid down specific standards that reiterated existing general obligations under the Staff Regulations of the Organization. Those standards determined that sexual exploitation and sexual abuse constituted serious misconduct and provided grounds for disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal. The Secretary-General's bulletin applied to all staff of the United Nations, including staff of separately administered organs and programmes, and required non-United Nations entities or individuals entering into cooperative arrangements with the Organization to abide by its provisions.

37. The Secretary-General had instructed the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs to establish a system for the implementation of the bulletin in the field, and had informed the Senior Management Group, which comprised heads of departments, funds and programmes, accordingly by a letter dated 22 October 2003. He had also informed the members of the Senior Management Group that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises was drawing up model complaint mechanisms and investigative protocols in response to the specific requests which the General Assembly had made in its resolution.

38. The Office of Human Resources Management had been given the responsibility for collecting and keeping information on investigations into cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and on the action taken as a result of such investigations. She was asking heads of departments, offices and programmes to submit to her, by 30 January 2004, information for the period from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003. That information would be used to produce the report which the General Assembly had requested. The report would be submitted to the General Assembly at the second part of its resumed fifty-eighth session. During the current year, the Secretariat had received no reports of investigations into allegations of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

39. **Mr. Snowdon** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that resolution 57/306 had been a landmark statement from the General Assembly on the need for the United Nations to protect vulnerable people in its care from sexual abuse. The publication of the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13) had been an essential step forward; it appropriately reinforced accountability and a zero-tolerance approach.

40. The steps taken by United Nations agencies and bodies in the past year had been positive, and had included the development of mechanisms, policies and procedures aimed at preventing and responding effectively to incidents. One example was the new prevention and response guidelines of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

41. The note of the Secretary-General had been introduced under agenda item 134, which related to peacekeeping. That must not be taken to mean that the issue was connected with peacekeeping alone, nor to mean that the subsequent report to the General Assembly should have a narrow focus. He expected a system-wide approach to be taken, since the matter needed coordination among the many United Nations agencies with a presence in the field and full cooperation between agencies, local authorities and troop contributors.

42. He looked forward to a full report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/306 at the resumed session of the General Assembly, including details concerning the implementation of paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 10, across the United Nations system.

43. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that his delegation was concerned about the problem of sexual exploitation in refugee camps and sexual misconduct by those involved in peacekeeping operations to which the Office of Internal Oversight Services had drawn attention in its report (A/57/465). It welcomed the steps taken by the Secretary-General and expected him to exercise leadership to maintain strict discipline in that field.

44. **Mr. Mazumdar** (India) asked why the note of the Secretary-General had been submitted under agenda item 134, which related to peacekeeping, if it had been a response to General Assembly resolution 57/306 and the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the investigation into sexual exploitation of refugees by aid workers in West Africa (A/57/465).

45. **Mr. Eljy** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation welcomed the note of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/58/559). It was anxious to make sure that the local population in the field was fully aware of the policies which the General Assembly had adopted. He also requested the Secretariat to distribute the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13) to the missions of all the Member States.

46. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the note of the Secretary-General (A/58/559) had been introduced under agenda item 134 because it was the custom not to change the agenda item under which an issue and its follow-up were considered. However, when the report on the implementation of the relevant paragraph of General Assembly resolution 57/306 was

submitted, it would be considered under a number of agenda items, reflecting the fact that the matter was of concern to the whole United Nations Secretariat and system.

Other matters

47. **Mr. Farid** (Saudi Arabia) said that at the Committee's previous meeting he had requested a written explanation of the discrepancy between the data on Saudi Arabia's total and average per capita gross national income (GNI) submitted to the Fifth Committee during the informal consultations on the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations and the data provided by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to the Committee on Contributions. He was deeply concerned that the information had not yet been supplied. He asked for an oral explanation of the discrepancy to be given at a forthcoming meeting of the Fifth Committee and for that explanation to be confirmed in writing.

48. Unless he received a clear and concise written explanation that could be forwarded to his capital for consideration and further instructions, his delegation would be unable to join a consensus on the draft resolution regarding the proposed new scale of peacekeeping assessments for 2004-2006 which the Committee was due to discuss.

49. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the written explanation which the representative of Saudi Arabia had requested had been prepared and would be distributed to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

50. **Ms. Buchanan** (New Zealand) said that, at previous informal consultations of the Committee regarding agenda item 59 (strengthening of the United Nations system), her delegation and others had asked for mock-ups and other additional information on the potential effects of proposed budgetary changes to be made available as official documents of the Committee in all of the official languages of the Organization. That matter should be given priority. Her delegation would value the views of the Advisory Committee on the matters in question, and it hoped that the Advisory Committee would find time to consider them as rapidly as possible. It also appealed to the officers of the Committee to allocate sufficient further time for that agenda item to be considered.

51. **Mr. Eljy** (Syrian Arab Republic) supported the request of the representative of New Zealand for additional information regarding agenda item 59 to be issued in all the official languages of the Organization and for the Advisory Committee to examine that information.

52. **The Chairman** confirmed that the documents which New Zealand had requested would be issued and would be passed to the Advisory Committee. Informal consultations on the matter would be scheduled as rapidly as possible.

Organization of work

53. **Ms. Afifi** (Morocco) said that she was deeply concerned that she had no clear information on the programme of work of the Committee, which now was entering its second month of deliberations. She hoped that the Committee's officers would provide more details, since the chairpersons of the regional groups were having difficulty making plans for their own work. As the chairperson of the Group of 77 and China, her problems were particularly acute: she must accommodate the views and work programmes of three other groups: the Latin American and Caribbean Group, the African Group and the Asian Group.

54. **The Chairman** said that the officers of the Committee met once or twice a week, and information on their discussions was subsequently disseminated as a matter of routine. He had a personal stake in making sure that the Group of 77 and China was kept up to date on developments, since over half of the officers of the Committee were from countries which belonged to the Group.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.